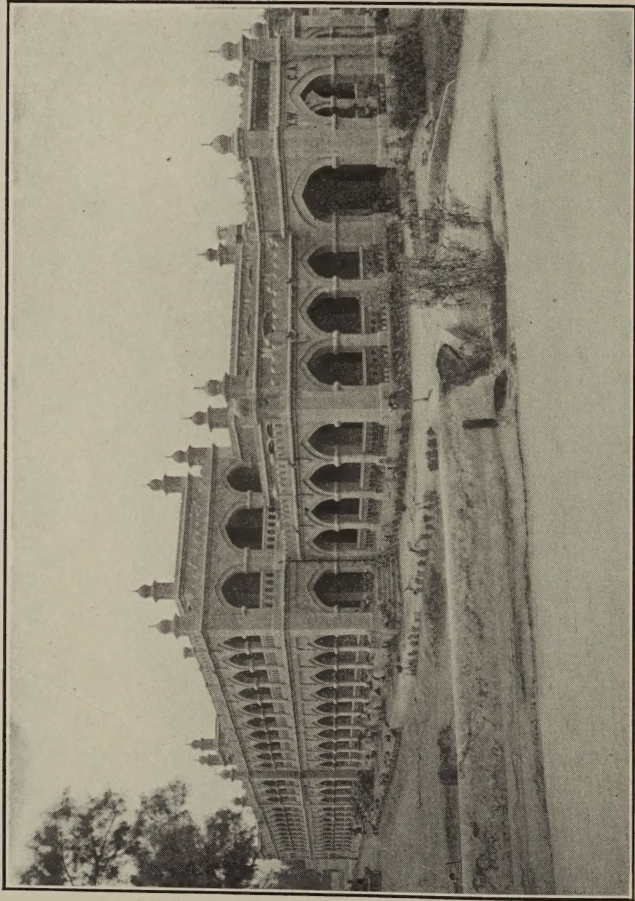


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A History of Association Work in Lahore

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A History of Association Work in Lahore

Lahore, the City.

For those who have never seen India, this land of sunshine, a description of the capital of the Punjab should be attempted to give an understanding of the environment in which the Association works and witnesses for Christ in that country.

The population of Lahore is 202,964 and out of these only 5,558 are Christians, which goes to prove how important this place of influence and witness is. Lahore is divided into four sections: (1) city, where practically all the Indians live in their narrow, quaint streets so well pictured for us by Kipling; (2) civil station, the residential quarters of the civil officials and other English people; (3) railway colony, the headquarters of the Northwestern Railway; (4) cantonments, which is entirely military, garrisoned by English and Indian troops, and is five miles distant from the civil station.

Difficulties in the Work.

The long distance between these sections creates great difficulty in the work. The railway, city and civil centers lie at the extreme borders of the areas and there are no tramways or omnibuses in India, so either carriages (which are expensive) or bicycles have to be used. The present institute and home is conveniently situated for the civil station, but it is far from the railway and city members, many of whom cannot afford carriage hire, so that a visit to the institute is not a common thing.

Social distinction is another problem which seriously hinders unity in the work. To give an instance; in the railway community the locomotive staff (men who drive the engines) stand aloof from the traffic staff (station masters, guards, etc.), each wife considering herself superior. In the railway district a member's house is kindly lent, where meetings are held, but because of these feelings the attendance is not what it might be.

One wonders what an American Association would say if from June to October the general committee could not meet; yet that is

No.

what happens here. In May, when the hot weather really sets in, as many ladies as possible go to the hills, with the result that those remaining do not constitute a quorum, and if any important matter arises it means getting votes and opinions by post. Once when the committee's decision was needed, a letter had to go 1,448 miles, taking at least a fortnight to circulate. Beside this, there are continual changes caused by people going home. Most officials take long furlough or long leave every two or three years, so that just as a committee member becomes really interested and grasps things, she leaves the country and someone else has to take her place. The constant changes and transfers hold good in every sphere, as all government servants are transferred every two or three years, so the difficulty includes the membership as a whole. It seems almost impossible to get continuity of service.

Home.

It is often expressed, and one does wonder oneself, what girls did before there was a Y. W. C. A. home. Typists in Lahore start work on Rs. 30 (\$10) per month and the

least charge that can be made them is Rs. 20 (\$6.50) which of course is far less than they would pay elsewhere. The rates are on a sliding scale, girls paying according to their salaries, and it is because a couple of rooms are put aside for visitors such as missionaries and others, who pay more, that we are able to carry on the running expenses of the boarding department and make these concessions. The rent of the house was met by public donations and monthly subscriptions. While speaking of rent, another reason why a new building was needed is the fact that landlords raise rents at pleasure and it must be paid or else other quarters must be found. Private houses are not built for Association requirements and to find one with suitable accommodation was a very great difficulty and the harm done to the work by continual changes does not need emphasis.

History of Progress towards New Building.

In this presentation of some of the difficulties of the work, with a need for a more central building with enough rooms to more nearly supply the demand by girls who are

employed, a history of the progress toward this end will not be without interest.

In 1901 there was an effort made to get a larger house so as to accommodate six girls instead of three. In 1902 further plans were made for a still larger house. This was secured in 1903 when the Association rented "Sunny View" on the Upper Mall. In the financial statement for the same year the amount in the building fund is given as Rs. 746/15/8 (\$280). In 1904 this had grown to Rs. 1,477/6/1 (\$492) and in 1905 the year closed with an important item about the probable gift of land from the Government for a building site. It was the desire of those interested to have a building suitable as an institute and home combined, in which thirty boarders could be accommodated. For this and a reading room, classroom and lecture hall for the institute work, Rs. 50,000 (\$16,665) was needed. We had Rs. 1,600 (\$534) in hand. (This land the Government did not give as there was some litigation regarding it.)

During 1906 the first donation came from America. Mrs. Boies' gift of Rs. 3,000 (\$1,000) came through Mrs. W. J. Clark. In

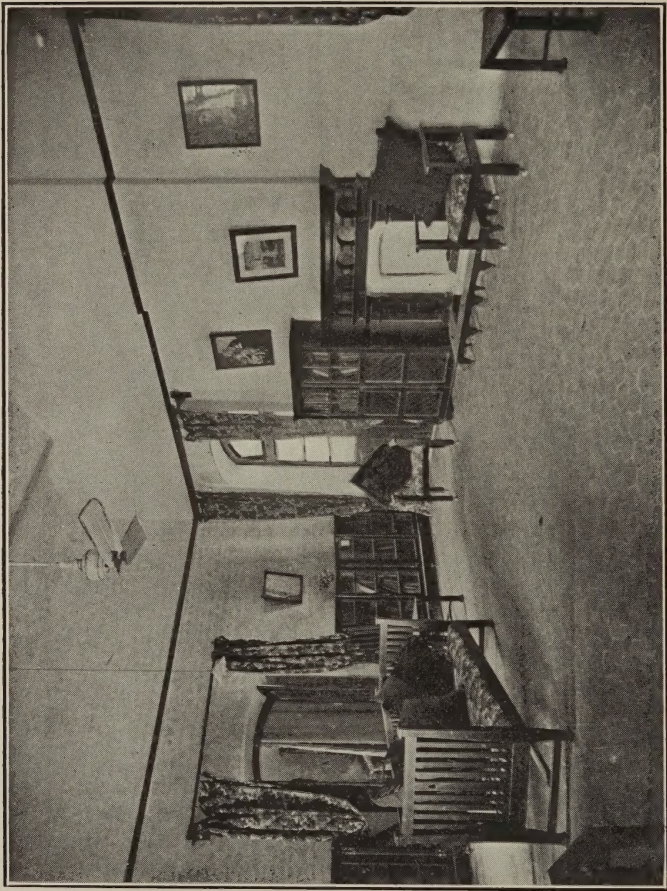
1907 the fund stood at Rs. 5,589/4/1 (\$1,800) and in 1908 at Rs. 6,049/10/11 (\$2,000). In 1909 Miss Hill made strenuous efforts to get a suitable site or building, and in that year the Government promised through the education department a grant of Rs. 10,000 (\$3,000) towards such an object. It was not till 1910 that the site on which the new building now stands, consisting of two and one half acres, was bought for Rs. 28,392 (\$9,000). Besides this, Lady Dane has given a strip of land of 4 kanals, which gave a much-needed width to the property. Miss Hill had in the meantime gone home on furlough and during that year appealed for necessary funds in America. To her untiring zeal and effort, under God's guidance, the gifts which have made the erection of the building possible were secured. The gifts from America will amount to Rs. 90,000 (\$30,000), then the Government very kindly gave us Rs. 15,000 (\$5,000); these two sums with the Rs. 6,049/10/10 (\$2,000) collected during the previous years, plus another Rs. 2,625 (\$1,500) raised in Lahore since 1910, makes a total of Rs. 113,674 (\$31,000). Of this, Rs. 28,392 (\$9,000) was paid for the

land, leaving a balance of Rs. 85,000 (\$28,000) for the building. It took nearly two years to begin the work; first, it took months to get suitable plans; America was consulted, and finally a Chicago architect's designs were adopted with modifications.

The Association owes to Mr. Dorman and Mr. Izat a debt of gratitude which cannot be expressed in words. They have given help and supervision in spite of the many other calls on their time. In all the preliminaries the advisory council once again lifted the heavy end of the burden; Dr. Ewing, Mr. Agnew and Mr. Dorman, it is hoped, will see the result of their labors which may in some measure repay them for all they have done.

New Building.

The building has been called "Morse Hall" after Miss Rebecca Morse, the founder of the American Foreign Department, in whose memory a great deal of the money was given in America. It stands on a convenient site at the junction of Abbott and Macleod Roads and is a handsome and well-appointed building. It contains accommodations for thirty-five residents, besides dining and drawing



LIBRARY IN LAHORE ASSOCIATION

rooms, library, three classrooms, office and a large gymnasium hall, the gift of Mrs. Mead of Plainfield, New Jersey, U. S. A., in which the opening ceremony took place. The hall is a beautiful room thirty-two feet by fifty feet and has a gallery at one end. It holds 300 people and is a great acquisition. It had to be a long, narrow building because the land was so shaped. It is of red brick and has quite an imposing appearance. The long passages give good ventilation and it promises to be very cool in the hot weather. The grounds are not laid out yet, but lawns, a good garden and tennis courts will make a big difference in the setting.

There are electric lights, and there will be electric fans in use later. This may sound strange to those who are accustomed to have fans, but it is of very late introduction in Lahore. Government House and one or two of the big hotels and clubs have had them, but it has only been put within the reach of other folk since last autumn.

A friend to whom the Association owes much is Mrs. G. D. Turner. She has furnished both the library and drawing room.

The curtains in the library are of cretonne with a bold design in fruit and flowers running from a deep red to a rich purple. The chairs and couch are covered with it too, and the cushions are of a deep red. Book shelves three feet high run all round the room and there is besides a beautiful writing desk for the use of members. On the walls there are copies of Angelo's prophets and sibyls from the Sistine Chapel, Rome. This room is much admired and an effort is being made to get a good supply of illustrated papers and magazines. The books number 600 and are a representative collection.

The drawing room is cosey and comfortable and has some lovely pictures in it, including one given by the Honorable Emily Kinnaird which represents Christ saving a lamb which has fallen down a precipice, and "The Reapers," given by Miss Hunter. A frieze runs round the top and is to be colored eventually either a pale yellow or grey. The curtains are of a soft grey material with a darker foliage scattered over with bright colored birds and butterflies, having a rich velvety look, and the lovely big chesterfield and chairs are covered with the same. A

delightful "Cosey Corner" and big comfortable cushions tell you something of the pleasure Lahore girls are now enjoying.

The dining room is pink and grey. The curtains are a strawberry pink and the walls a pale grey. The chairs were made by the American Presbyterian Industrial Mission in Gujranwala, which also made the sideboard, which is Lady Dane's gift.

The bedrooms are all furnished alike with an iron bedstead, chest of drawers, dressing table, comfortable chair and table, a wall closet and carpet (dhurrie). This latter is red to match the curtain leading into the passage and the blinds are stencilled in red and green. The bedspreads are red and white to match, making each room very pretty. The "Hill Memorial" room is the largest bedroom in the house and the fittings for this have been sent by the various members of the Hill family.

The bath rooms are fitted with English baths and basins, which are a great advance on the old arrangements. At present no hot water has been put in because "it requires an expert" and such a person is not to be found

in Lahore. Later it is hoped something can be done about it.

The boarding home has had every available space occupied. Fifty-three transient guests have been accommodated during the year, and at least thirty applicants have had to be refused for want of room.

Classes.

The educational classes in typewriting, shorthand, commercial English and drawing have been held, the attendance during the earlier months being the highest on record. Altogether, since last April, eighty pupils have attended the classes for a longer or shorter period. The annual examination in typewriting was held in April, and fifteen out of the eighteen students who entered, passed; the first two gained the gold and silver medals presented by the Remington Company. Much advance has been made in shorthand, eighteen pupils successfully passed Pitman's examinations, while one has gained a certificate for speed of eighty words a minute. The classes are under government control and the educational department grants the certificates for the examinations. The fee for each subject

is only Rs. 1 (\$.30) per month, which makes it perfectly easy for everyone to avail herself of this privilege.

As the nearest Association educational center to Delhi, the new capital, the Lahore Association hopes to be the source of supply for the Government of India offices, many of which are beginning to employ women typists and clerks.

The spiritual work of the Association, which is its core, is not the side in which most outward results can be seen, but God has deepened and enriched many lives during the past year. Bible classes every week and a monthly prayer meeting were held at two centers.

Lady Dane, the Association's president, who, in all her busy life, has found time to give the work her sympathy, time and thought, will be no longer at Lahore. They lose not only a president, but a friend, and one whom Lahore will long remember.

In the work that lies before them the committee of Lahore ask for prayer, sympathy and cooperation, that in the future development of the Association, they may have wisdom, understanding and right judgment in all things.

